



The Square Kilometre Array, the world's biggest radio telescope, is the most exciting and significant scientific project currently under development. Discover SKA is a celebration of the SKA telescope - making the SKA project and our bid to host it accessible to all Australians and New Zealanders.

We're glad you could join the celebration of the SKA and to help reach our goal of holding hundreds of events across Australia and New Zealand between April and June 2011.

A successful Discover SKA event will be the result of careful planning and preparation. This guide will take you through elements to consider when planning your event, though it is not designed to be prescriptive. We encourage you to use your experience and creativity when developing your event!

During the Discover SKA campaign there will be hundreds of events running concurrently across the country. Due to these numbers, we can't be heavily involved in each event, but we do want to provide as much assistance as possible.

Remember to keep checking this website for updated information as it becomes available, and subscribe to newsletters.

This manual will take you through the four stages of holding an event.

- 1) Initial Ideas
- 2) Planning & Implementing
- 3) On the Day
- 4) Post-event

Initial ideas

There are no restrictions on the type of event you may hold; we only ask that it seek to fulfill the Discover SKA objectives:

- ▶ To generate public awareness of the SKA project.
- ▶ To gain community support for the SKA project and Australia and New Zealand's bid to host it in our own backyard.

Define who, what & why?

We suggest that you should initially concentrate on deciding key features of your event such as your audience, the type and format of your event and most importantly, how your event will match the Discover SKA objectives.

Audience

Your target audience will play a large part in deciding the type of event you will host and your publicity campaign. Consider their age, interests, experience in the event's topic and what will encourage them to attend.

Type & Format

Consider the subject matter, theme and format of the event. The SKA is a large-scale project with expected impacts in the following areas:

- ▶ Radio astronomy and understanding the universe
- ▶ Information technology (especially high-performance computing)
- ▶ Renewable energy generation, storage and distribution
- ▶ Manufacturing and systems engineering
- ▶ Communications technologies and infrastructure
- ▶ Socio-economic benefits.

The SKA and its expected impacts can be explored through many types of events. Some popular formats include hands-on activities, displays or exhibitions, public discussions and presentations.

Remember to consider what type of event your target audience would be interested in when deciding on the event format. We suggest you generate several ideas, analyse their relative strengths and select the strongest idea.



Objectives

You should prepare event objectives and keep them in mind as you plan, implement and evaluate your event. Your objectives will be a strong reference point and keep you on track. Think about what you hope to achieve for your organisation, the presenters and the participants.

Gather a team

No matter the scale of your event, you will most probably need to work with others to see it become a reality. Consider how many people you will need to plan, publicise, set-up and run the event. Working in a team will make the event preparations easier and more enjoyable.

When bringing a team together, consider your event's requirements and how each member will satisfy them. Working with a partner organisation such as a school, university, museum or a local business may also allow you to share experience and better meet your requirements.

Prepare the budget

A budget for your event is very important. To prepare your budget, consider sources of income such as admissions, sponsorships or donations, and expenses such as speaker's fees, venue hire, publicity and insurance. You should also set aside around 10% of your budget for unexpected incidental costs that may occur.

An expanded list of expenses is included in the event implementation template online at the www.ska.gov.au website.

Planning and implementing

You should now have developed initial concepts, defined the "who, what and why" of the event, gathered a team and prepared the budget. This is a solid foundation to the structure of your event and it's time to start implementing.

Identify tasks & responsibilities

We suggest you use the simple event implementation excel template outlined in the event kit. The 'Event Implementation' template will allow you to identify and track all the elements and tasks involved in staging an event, who's responsible for each task and when they need to be completed by. Please remember that the template list is a guide and may need to be tailored to your event.

Event logistics

As identified in the 'Tasks & Responsibilities', when planning an event for Discover SKA there are many elements to consider.

Where to hold the event?

Events can take place at a variety of venues including schools, workplaces, or in a public space. Choosing a venue suitable for your event will be dependent on both the event format and the target audience. Check also if public liability insurance will be covered by the venue.



When to hold the event?

Discover SKA will take place over three months from April to June 2011.

You should choose an event time and day that will appeal to your target audience. For example, schools will come during weekdays, families will come at weekends.

How to attract your audience?

Your publicity campaign will be crucial to the success of your event, how you market the event will depend on the event itself and who you wish to attract.

As well as including your event on the Discover SKA website, we encourage you to send out press releases, make flyers and posters or send out a mail out to attract participants.

Acknowledgements

Any acknowledgements or references to Discover SKA will bolster the impact and reach of the campaign. Acknowledgements of Discover SKA also assist in achieving the campaign's objective of promoting and encouraging interest in the areas of astronomy, science and engineering.

Acknowledgements could either be done by mentioning Discover SKA eg "(NAME OF EVENT) is brought to you as a part of Discover SKA" or by using the Discover SKA 'wordmark'. SKA promotional material can be downloaded from our website for distribution at your event.

Specifics for event day

It is important to work through every aspect of the event from start to end. Specifics for the day are outlined below.

Venue

In preparing your venue, consider how you will deal with time overruns and clean-up time, how attendees will arrive at and find the venue, and what equipment you may need to provide. You should also be familiar with the occupational health and safety procedures and fire regulations for the building.

Attendees

Once you have an interested audience you need to make sure that you supply them with all the information and facilities they need to enjoy the event. Consider audience comfort, including furniture, refreshments, audio levels and room temperature. If children need to be accompanied by an adult, ensure this is clear on any information provided.

Staff

Your staff on the day will be pivotal to the audience experience. All staff should be equipped with an overview of the event, including their responsibilities, session times, venue details and an audience profile.

Anything else

We suggest you consider what could go wrong and plan for any disruptions. Think about:

- ▶ Misunderstandings of roles, directions or instructions for staff or the public;
- ▶ Audio malfunctions;
- ▶ Risk assessments, first aid cover, fire regulations;
- ▶ Have a Plan B—if it rains, if the speaker doesn't arrive etc.

Prepare a running sheet

In the event kit, you will find an Event Run Sheet template that can be adapted to your Discover SKA event. A running sheet outlines the event minute-to-minute, designating responsibilities and tasks for the day. Everyone involved in the event should have a copy of the running sheet and follow it carefully.



On the day

Before the event

Arrive with plenty of time and plenty of people. Have an action plan in your mind (or written down) with what needs to be done in priority order. Allow enough time for you to get everything ready, including checking necessary equipment, arranging furniture and displaying directional signs before people begin to arrive.

During the event

Keep a tight hold of your running sheet, monitor the event and be ready to activate your Plan B if anything goes wrong.

Be ready with a digital camera to capture moments of excitement or interest, and keep a note of the discussion topics or areas of particular interest to the public. If the event isn't ticketed, be sure to keep a track on the number of attendees.

After the event

Ensure the clean-up operation is effective and complete any financial transactions resulting from the event. Most importantly, be sure to sincerely thank all staff and presenters.

Post event

Event evaluation

When evaluating the event, you may want to consider how large your audience was, if it was the type of audience you had targeted, whether the event was enjoyable, if your publicity was effective and if preparations were sufficient. Information such as this is good for evaluating the event's success and planning future events.

Follow-up activities

In the days after the event, you may want to thank all participants, hold a debriefing session with your event team, and pay any outstanding accounts. So that the success of the whole Discover SKA campaign can be measured, send an event evaluation form (available on the website) and interesting photographs to Annie Harris at aharris@questacon.edu.au.

Thank you

Thank you for being a part of Discover SKA, an international celebration of the Square Kilometre Array and Australia and New Zealand's bid to host the SKA. Your contribution to raising awareness of the SKA, science and astronomy and all other aspects of the project are greatly appreciated.

Good luck and have fun with your event!



Swinburne Astronomy Productions/SKA Program Development Office.